



## **MAPA Utilizes Public Health Tracking Information to Forecast Metro Area Population**

### **Iowa Public Health Tracking Overview:**

Iowa Public Health Tracking is the expansion of the Data Warehouse to include the Public Health Tracking Program at the Iowa Department of Public Health. This infrastructure holds information concerning a number of crucial public health topics such as hospitalizations; prenatal health; water and air quality; and birth and death records. The purpose of Public Health Tracking is to compile important health and environmental information in one place that can be easily accessed by stakeholders. These stakeholders include county health departments, health organization members, private companies, legislators and the general

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public. The aim of Iowa Public Health Tracking is to provide these stakeholders with the necessary data to formulate and enact educated and efficient public health policy.

### **The Stakeholder: Who is MAPA?**



The Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) is a group of local government officials and citizens from eastern Nebraska and the western Iowa counties of Douglas, Sarpy, Washington Pottawattamie, and Mills. The aim of MAPA is to address the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metro area as a whole for regional planning issues. Some of the regional planning MAPA facilitates includes improving and expanding public transportation, fostering economic and community development, monitoring and improving ozone and air quality, waste and emergency management and sustainability. In order to achieve these aims, MAPA compiles and analyzes an array of data on

the infrastructure and population of the Omaha-Council Bluffs region. Therefore, MAPA chose to pull information from the Iowa Public Health Tracking system in order to improve regional planning efforts.



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### MAPA Utilizes Public Health Tracking Information:



MAPA accessed vital records data for Pottawattamie, Mills, Harrison and Shelby Counties in Iowa. This data contained birth and death records that encompassed the past 30 years and was used in combination with census data to create age specific fertility rates, death rates, and inferred migration patterns at the county level. By compiling this information, MAPA was able to understand the historical Omaha-Council Bluffs metro region's population dynamics and forecast future population composition. These population forecasts were especially important to MAPA since it aided them in meeting federal and grant requirements:

*These population forecasts are being used to develop a spatial land use allocation model for our federally mandated regional socio-economic forecasts and transportation modeling as well as assisting MAPA in the three year HUD Sustainable Communities Grant (Heartland 2050).*

–GIS Coordinator Paul Hunt, MAPA

### Community Design-MAPA working towards CDC Tracking Goals:

Public health problems in the U.S., such as motor vehicle-related injuries, obesity, physical inactivity, and breathing and heart problems related to air pollution are all influenced by the design of a community. Designing communities that encourage healthy choices is critical to improving the health and quality of life of community members. Community design elements include schools, workplaces, and homes, roads, parks and recreation areas, transportation systems, and places to buy food. By being conscientious of future population dynamics, healthier and safer communities can be created. MAPA's use of vital records data to forecast population dynamics in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area is an crucial way to continue to improve community health through contentious community design.

